

# Sarah, Anna and Louise– What No Thelma?: Discovering Louise Talma and Her Shorter Piano Works<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract:**

This is an adaptation of a presentation given at the SEMLA meeting in Columbus, GA, in October of 2006. After a brief description of her six-month sabbatical at the Library of Congress, Music Librarian Sarah Dorsey (UNC Greensboro) outlines the life of Louise Talma. A short description of her style is followed by some quotes from Louise and a discussion and performance of specific piano pieces<sup>1</sup> performed by Anna Neal, Music Librarian at the University of Memphis.

**KEYWORDS.** 20th-century piano music, Library of Congress Music Division, Louise Talma

## **Article:**

### **WHY LOUISE?**

While struggling with exactly how to approach this opportunity to talk about Louise, I realized that she was adamant about being a composer, not a female composer. There is nothing about composing that really has anything to do with gender. I think that her insistence on this emphasis was her way of nudging the world to be more enlightened. But thirty years later (I'm sorry to say, Louise), we are still living in a society that has difficulty supporting and encouraging young female composers.

In September of 2006, Professor Eileen Strempele of Syracuse University published an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*—"How Colleges Can Encourage Female Composers." The article begins: "If classical music during the 20th and 21st centuries has become increasingly invisible as reflected in such depressing tomes as Joseph Horowitz's *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall* (Norton, 2005), then surely the contributions of female composers are so puny as to be nearly undetectable." The article then goes on to discuss Professor Strempele's findings that the only way to really make an impression on those engaged in the study of music (not to mention the general public) is to present live performances, and universities are in a good position to do that through commissions.

One of the reasons I am compelled to tell Louise's story is that she was a composer in the 20th century who, over the course of her life, wrote in all genres, received commissions and awards and, in short, "made it" as a composer and she has, for all intents and purposes, disappeared.

She was, in fact, a pioneer in many instances. She was the first woman to win two Guggenheims in composition (in 1946 and 1947) and the first woman to be admitted to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1974 (and, by the way, the first female composer to receive their Waite award in 1960—which makes me wonder why it then took them 14 years to let her into the club, but that is for another discussion). In addition to all of these firsts, she received a couple of NEA grants, a Fulbright, other grants, and three honorary doctorates—the list goes on. She was also the first American female composer to have a full-length opera premiered in Europe (*The*

*Alcesteiad*, written with Thornton Wilder, premiered in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1962). So she was no slouch. If, in telling her story, we can encourage some women in their compositional efforts, well, then, all the better.

### SABBATICAL OF SORTS

I knew nothing about Louise before starting to write my proposal for the sabbatical I took last year. Thanks to Robin Rausch of the Library of Congress (Co-Chair with me of the Women in Music Roundtable of the Music Library Association) who introduced us. Because I think that Louise has possessed me from the other side, I realize that I need to be careful about how I speak of her. Now and again I might lapse into present tense when I discuss Louise, but just so you know, I realize that she is dead, and I apologize if this makes any of you uncomfortable. The un-academic first person is just more comfortable, and I hope she sees no disrespect in it.

So, the adventure of a public services librarian spending six months pretending to be an archivist is a story in itself. I'll give a brief description of the whole process and illustrate with some telling photographs.

First of all, I was planning on processing thirty boxes. No such luck! There were seventy boxes! Eek! In any case, I had over twice as much material as I planned on dealing with. After a minor freak out, we came up with a plan. First I fully processed eighteen boxes of her sketches and

PHOTO 1



*Photo courtesy of Sarah B. Dorsey*

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musical manuscripts and then scores of music by other composers. Louise was an insatiable correspondent and I rough sorted over 7,300 pieces in less than two months. She liked staying in touch. I think if she lived now she'd be addicted to email. The rest of the collection, including photographs, programs, clippings, and other materials, was rough sorted, but has yet to be housed in final locations. I hope these photos help to show the somewhat claustrophobic work space in which I organized seventy boxes of diverse materials—I called it my “double-wide cubicle.” This was truly an adventure.

I now have a renewed respect and appreciation for the challenges and frustrations (I mean opportunities!) that archivists face on a daily basis. There are multiple decisions to be made at each stage of the process, and all with the clock ticking. At the same time, one must keep an eye towards what information will be useful to the researcher using the finding aid and how to make retrieval effortless. I was lucky enough to be working with a

wonderfully patient music specialist, Mark Horowitz. He had to remind me over and over that I was NOT cataloging these materials. At the beginning of the process I kept arguing to include more

PHOTO 2



*Photo courtesy of Sarah B. Dorsey*

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information in the finding aid than was necessary. Luckily, eventually I learned and he was patient and we are still speaking to each other.

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Louise Talma was born in Arcachon, France, which is on the southern Atlantic coast. She was born on Halloween in 1906. Yes, her hundredth birthday is coming up and, yes, I will be dressed as her for Halloween—gotta find some of those cool retro glasses.

Her mother, Alma Cecile Garrigue, was an opera singer who appeared at the Met and in Europe. She played Susanna in a production of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci* in London. In fact, she was overseas when Louise was born and they did not return to the states to live until Louise was six, so Louise's first languages were French and German. Louise's father is described in most of her biographical information as having died when she was young. But, I found a draft of a letter from Louise to Nadia Boulanger (so much to say about \*her\* but that's for later) that indicated otherwise.

From this letter it sounds as though Louise's mom and dad got pregnant, did the "right" thing, and got married, but before Louise was born they realized (for whatever reason) that the marriage was a mistake. It was not until Louise was about twelve years old that her mother finally told her the truth. It was clear from this letter to Nadia, though, that Louise had been distressed to learn this information. Suffice it to say that Louise was raised single-handedly by her mother, and I'm not exactly sure how they survived financially. My theory is that Cecile's family helped out.

In any case, Louise and her mother lived on Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan for almost thirty years. Louise started piano lessons at age 5. By the age of 10, she was accompanying her mother and playing solo works of Schubert, Schumann, and Mozart. She was clearly adept and won a number of scholarships.

Louise and her mother both attended The American Conservatory at Fontainebleau, France, during the summer of 1926. The school was started after WWI when good relations between the U.S. and France encouraged cultural exchange. This school and its director for many years, Nadia Boulanger, influenced Louise's life

profoundly, both personally and professionally. Louise went every summer until 1939, when the school was shut down for the duration of World War II. She went eight additional summers, though not consecutively, between 1949 and 1982 ('49, '51, '61, '68, '71, '78, '81, and '82).

Louise went to Fontainebleau first as a pianist to study with the famous Frenchman Isidore Philipp. But after her first summer, she was encouraged by Boulanger to take up composing in a serious manner. Their relationship grew over the years, and Louise was the first American, male or female, to be invited by Nadia, in 1936, to help teach at Fontainebleau. One cannot consider the history of American music of the 20th century without taking into account the deep influence of Boulanger. She taught many famous American composers, including Elliot Carter, Aaron Copland, and Philip Glass.

There has been much written about Nadia Boulanger, and I have just recently started scratching the surface. But from what I've gleaned so far, Nadia had a very intense relationship with her students in general. When her female students went off to get married (and stopped studying with her), Nadia was often grumpy and would cut off communications with them, even though she stated more than once that motherhood was the most sacred duty. Sounds like mixed messages to me, and apparently she was famous for these.

In any case, there are more than 300 items of communication from Nadia to Louise in the collection at the Library of Congress that will tell more of the story. Louise, who was raised as a Protestant, became an atheist at some point, and then converted by Nadia's example to Catholicism in 1935. Nadia was her godmother. Most of the correspondence between them is in French (*Puis, je dois etudier, certainement!*).

There were a number of strong parallels between the lives of these two women in addition to the obvious facts that they were both musicians and teachers, single and childless. They were raised mostly by their mothers, who both died of Parkinson's disease, and because they were the only family left to do so, they ended up tending to their invalid mothers and working to pay the bills. This necessity (or dutiful devotion) thus postponed their ability to have personal lives of their own. As Louise said in an interview: "I was almost 40 before I launched an independent career . . . most composers are dead by that time."<sup>2</sup>

Between the summers at Fontainebleau, Louise was working hard to support herself and her ailing mother. Although she had extensive musical training at Juilliard and Fontainebleau, she had not yet earned her bachelor's degree when she began teaching music education at Hunter College. She taught while attending college for her own degree in the evenings. As a student Louise found she had an aptitude and interest in chemistry, but was never able to pursue it because she was already then earning their keep teaching music. She finished up her undergrad at NYU and then went on to get her masters at Columbia. "I can't begin to tell you the amount of homework I've done on subways and buses," quipped Louise in 1986.<sup>3</sup>

During her fifty-one years of teaching at Hunter, Louise never stopped learning. She knew eight languages (French, German, English, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Latin). She was studying Russian long after her degrees were done so as to read Chekov in the original, much in the same way that she learned to play the organ so as to play Bach on the original instrument.

But back to the story in progress ... So, in 1942 Louise's mother died and Louise was, for the first time in her life, alone—a free agent. In addition to her grief and exhaustion, she must have been somewhat disoriented. Something happened that I am still unclear on, but Louise and Nadia had some kind of falling out just as Louise needed her most. I have to translate more letters, and I hope to go to the Boulanger archive at the Bibliothèque Nationale this coming summer to look at the 256 letters from Louise to Nadia to help unravel the story.

In any case, this was when her teacher and mentor at Columbia, composer Marian Bauer, came to the rescue and suggested Louise apply for a residency at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, NH. In an interview in 1986 Louise said, "I owe that lady a great deal ... the decision to go ... to the MacDowell Colony ... literally saved my life at the time."<sup>4</sup> Founded in 1907, this is the oldest artist's colony in the United States and was

established by Marian MacDowell in memory of her husband, composer Edward MacDowell. Starting in 1943, Louise found refuge in the woods and wrote most of her music there.

She met many writers, sculptors, and painters at MacDowell, as well as a number of composers from Boston. Because Louise was such an accomplished pianist, she often played pieces by these composers, including Lukas Foss who addressed her as Louiseschen in correspondence (numbering over 200 in the LC collection). In the collection there is a sketch of Louise and Lukas playing her Four Handed Fun which they premiered at the MacDowell colony in 1943.

Louise spent many residencies at the MacDowell Colony. She was known there as a shark at “cowboy pool.” Often seen with a glass in one hand and a cigarette in the other, Louise smoked and drank her whole life, but lived nonetheless to just two months shy of her 90th birthday.

The sanctuary of MacDowell was dear to Louise, and she seemed to spend as much time there as she could over the years. She celebrated many of her later birthdays there with her MacDowell family. She evidently wanted to make sure that this haven continued to thrive and to nourish artists of all types because she left the colony a million dollars in her will, as well as her piano and exclusive rights to her works.

But the person she met there who most changed her life was Thornton Wilder, famous American writer of *Our Town*, *The Skin of our Teeth*, and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, among others. Thornton had heard one of her pieces and asked her to write an opera with him. A number of composers would have been delighted to do this ... Louise balked, but Thornton persisted. From an interview in 1979, Louise tells the story:

I never found out why he decided to do an opera with me. Everybody was after him to write librettos. (Aaron Copland, everyone.) All he knew of my music was a five- or seven-minute piano piece. Then, within two weeks of meeting me he said. ‘Louise, we’re going to write a grand opera together. No holds barred. Twelve principals, a big chorus, a big orchestra!’ I didn’t know what to say. I’d never even thought of writing opera. It took a year for him to persuade me that he really meant it because I was not at all the kind of person who went for opera or thought that I had anything that I could do with an operatic libretto.... Then somebody said to me, ‘You’ve got to be insane to say no and so I accepted. That was in 1955. It took me three years to compose and two years to orchestrate. And we didn’t even have a producer. That’s definitely not the way to go about writing an opera.’<sup>5</sup>

But luckily Thornton had connections—it was premiered in 1962 in Frankfurt, Germany. Opening night there were fifty curtain calls and a twenty-minute ovation (the NYT reviewer timed it<sup>6</sup>) and shouts of “Louise, Louise” rang in the air. This was Louise’s greatest compositional triumph. She was fifty-five years old.

When Louise returned to the states, she won many of her awards due to this opera that would never be performed in the original English or in the U.S. during her lifetime. She realized that the only way to get opera performed was to make it for smaller forces. So she did over ten years later.

In a letter to Wilder (she addresses him as “Thorny”) in the spring of 1974, she outlines the synopsis of the piece she plans to work on that summer. The letter is conveniently copied and inserted with the score (thank you, Louise). She says: “... the real meaning of it is that *everyone* is longing to get away from all the noise, dirt, crowds, confusion, rush that surrounds us to a saner way of life.” Remember, Louise lived in Manhattan most of her life. She called the piece a divertimento in seven scenes for three voices and small chamber ensemble, *Have you Heard? Do You Know?* I call it a chamber opera.

Because this was the only composition for which she wrote the text, I believe it to be a kind of credo. This is the big soprano aria:

Oh, I’m tired, tired. I’m tired of all this chatter, all this yakety yak. I want ... I want ... I want a quiet place far away, near a flowing brook and a wood, where I can watch the clouds go by, or look at stars the whole night through, and hear the birds sing at dawn. I want to go to that silent place in the woods where the goldenrod plumes in the sun, and the trees are aflame in the fall, and the lilac blooms in the spring, and birches stand slim and white like sentinels in the night. Oh! What’s the use of all the turmoil, all the strain, if all it leads to is weariness and exhaustion. Somewhere there has to be a haven, a harbor, a place of renewal where there are no

computers, no accountants, no screaming discotheques. Out there, somewhere, there is a quiet place far away, which I must find without delay, before the days of my youth have passed away.

Well, except for the youth part, I am so there. The discotheque is really the only thing that dates this text. The rest stands today, thirty-plus years later. She is clearly describing the New Hampshire woods and the MacDowell Colony.

How fitting then, that she would leave a million dollars to the MacDowell Colony—and hopefully someday I'll be able to figure out how she had that much to give them. She certainly did not earn it at Hunter College. Stories from MacDowell staff who remember her say she wore threadbare coats and shoes in need of repair while there in the later years, and the colony staff would steal them from her, repair them, and return them to her.

## THE MUSIC

We focused on her shorter piano works for this presentation, but Louise composed in pretty much every genre from solo song to full-length opera and everything in between, including solo piano, chamber music, choral music (accompanied and unaccompanied), and orchestral music. Because she was a piano virtuosa herself, she did tend to write mostly for piano at the beginning of her career and ventured into larger forces the more established and accomplished she became.

She composed in a neoclassical style, and she claims there are three stylistic periods. First there was the early style, neoclassical and mostly tonal. Then the middle, when she started using a modified twelve-tone technique, but still mostly retaining her previous style. "I like to use serialism as a tool and to incorporate it with the other forms in music. I see no reason for chopping off what's developed simply because something new has come along. I believe in using all the tools available."<sup>7</sup> Then there was the third period, when she relaxed the twelve-tone technique, without abandoning it completely, and settled into her "mature" style.

As mentioned earlier, thanks to her time at the MacDowell Colony, Louise became associated with a group of composers from Boston, some of whom also studied with Boulanger. She played a number of pieces by them. The list includes Lukas Foss, Arthur Berger, Irving Fine, Harold Shapero, Claudio Spies, and Alexie Haieff. A dissertation by Carole Jean Harris from 2002 (SUNY Buffalo) has a title that gives a different emphasis: "The French Connection: The Neoclassical Influence of Stravinsky, Through Boulanger, on the Music of Copland, Talma and Piston." Berger wrote of this group as a "Stravinsky school" with additional influence from Aaron Copland.<sup>8</sup>

However it happened, the influence of Stravinsky on Louise Talma is evident in her compositional style. Techniques she utilized which are traceable to Stravinsky include the use of ostinati to create blocks of musical material, which are then manipulated in various ways to create tension and movement. This technique is exhibited in a number of pieces mentioned later, especially the Alleluia in Form of Toccata and Etude Number 4. She also used conventional tonal elements (such as cadences or functional bass lines) in nontraditional ways and created ambiguity of key center, another neoclassical technique. Her music is precise and well constructed, yet imaginative and engaging as well.

In a Stravinsky memorial issue of *Perspectives of New Music* in 1971, Talma wrote: "How fortunate we were to have lived in the time of Igor Stravinsky ... we need to hold fast to the principles he so grandly exemplified in his work: clarity, order, precision, control ...."<sup>9</sup> These words could describe her music in its transparency and charm. As she said, later in her career,

I have great admiration for my colleagues as musicians and as people. But too many composers become involved in intellectual speculation which seems to matter more to them than the sound that comes out of all this speculation. Either that, or they chase a simplistic repetition. I don't want to be hypnotized. I don't want to be mesmerized. What I want is what I get when I hear the Juilliard Quartet play Beethoven—in other words, something which offers me something so challenging to both my musical and my intellectual desires that I cannot be bored even for a moment.... Although I don't like the term, I do hope that this trend toward what has come to

be called neo-Romanticism continues, [Ms. Talma continued]. Music should sound. It should be spontaneous but not simplistic. It should speak in human terms.<sup>10</sup>

Her Three Bagatelles (for Thornton) are a good introduction to the piano works, combining, as they do, her foray into serial technique alongside her lifelong neoclassical bent. Though composed last, the first adheres most closely of the three to serial technique, but none are so rigidly twelve-tone as to bypass her sense of melodic line or musical accessibility. The tone row is merely another compositional tool, shaping melody or gesture. The set includes many of her signature style elements, including spare texture, rhythmic vitality, dry sound, contrapuntal interest, and juxtaposition of a long, almost sinuous melody, against a detached, repetitive bass line.

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Talma's interest in rhythmic energy, so important in the Bagatelles, is even more clearly exemplified in the *Alleluia in Form of Toccata*, written some eight years prior to the Bagatelles. This work is all about rhythm. Its lean texture, contrapuntal technique, lack of pedal, and frequent syncopation all support the lively and energetic thrust of the piece. The contrasting section with a *legato cantabile* melody over detached bass serves mainly to set the animated primary material in relief. Despite the relative paucity of melodic material and repetitious figuration, the piece is successful through sheer driving energy and a Stravinskyesque build-up of tension with repetition of blocks of material mentioned earlier. This is the piece Thornton Wilder heard that convinced him to ask Talma to write an opera with him.<sup>11</sup>

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Borrowing much of the stylistic manner of the *Alleluia is the Etude No. 2* (for Estelle Hershler who had lost use of her right foot). Like the *Alleluia*, it offers a contrasting section of legato melody over a detached bass, but its major interest lies in its rhythmic propulsion. Wide skips, staccato touch, lines bouncing from one hand to the other maintain the high energy level.

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Composed in 1954, the Six Etudes were Talma's first published twelve-tone works. With the Etudes, she imposes dual compositional restrictions—serial technique and focus on a specific technical concern for each piece. Still, she is more concerned with the resulting music than with the compositional process alone.

In a letter responding to questions from a student writing about her Etudes, Talma says, "The *Etudes* were written to challenge the pianist technically and musically. For this I chose six pianistic problems which, with the exception of the staccato one (no. 2), had not been the subject of previous etudes, at least of those known to me." And later in the letter:

As for your second question about their being 'used for study similar to the way Chopin's etudes are used today' the answer is yes, though I must add that I consider the Chopin etudes such masterpieces of music I would not have the presumption to mention mine in the same breath. But I have tried first of all to make them pieces of music, and only secondarily pieces of virtuosity. I am not at all interested in writing etudes which are merely display pieces. All the etudes are serial in technique. They are the first things I wrote using this technique, my previous music having all been neo-classic in style. Each etude has a different twelve-tone set.

Each was dedicated to a different person for different reasons (see notes), but the most telling quote from this letter is in response to the student's question about 20th-century piano techniques. "When it comes to forearm or flat palm clusters the effect is so limited it has no interest for me. And as for tampering with the inside of the piano I have much too much respect for the exquisite adjustments of its parts to do that. You might as well ask a surgeon to use his instruments to open a tin can."<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to so much of her music, Etude No. 3 (to John Edmunds who commissioned the piece) specifically focuses on pedaling—the sostenuto pedal, at any rate. Subtitled “For the study of the sostenuto pedal,” it also is a study in contrasts, with the long tones held in the sostenuto pedal matched against the quick, almost wispy, figuration around them. Additionally, the contrast is one of dynamics as the quicker figures most often form an immediate contrast to the longer tones.

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An even more significant study of contrast is found in Etude No. 1 (to Thornton Wilder who wondered whether there was an etude on pianissimo). A quick *forte* gesture held with the pedal opens the piece and is immediately followed by a *pianissimo, una corda, senza pedale* section. The pattern is repeated and then is followed by a long section of legato pianissimo with a more static harmony and a placid feel to the line and rhythm. A brief return to the style of the opening interrupts but is quickly followed by longer notes at *pianissimo* and *pianississimo* to close.

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Etude No. 4 (to Paul Nordoff, whose violin and piano sonata challenged Talma with similar wide leaps in the piano part) is a virtuosic workout for the pianist in wide leaps for both hands at a challenging metronome marking and the direction “very sharp, even and light.” This Etude sounds more clearly like an etude in the sense of “study” but still maintains musical interest in the overall effect of the movement in harmony and line.

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As with the Six Etudes, most of the *Soundshots* (written in 1974, except for the first two and the last one, which were written in 1944) are devoted to specific technical concerns. Originally titled *Little Pieces for Little Fingers*, *Soundshots* is more overtly pedagogical. The pieces are short, often only a page or less. They recall childhood scenes and interests in a gentle, lighthearted way.

Clarity of line, lack of pedal, and spirited rhythmic interest are still prominent, e.g., in “Skipping” or “Whirling Pin Wheels”, although giving way to heavier textures and a more plodding feel when needed, as in “Heavy Load.”

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The individual pieces are cleverly picturesque in detailing movements and sounds. The quick grace notes and wide leaps of “Jumping High,” the rhythmic figures of “Skipping,” and the moderate sway of “The Swing” closely mimic the motions described, and the onomatopoeic depictions of bird song in “The Robin” or “The Bird Says ‘Bob White’” leave no doubt about the subject of the piece.

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Technical concerns addressed include independence of hands in “The Clocks,” which becomes fairly tricky in maintaining independence between the hands and among the fingers of one hand. Glissandi are prominent in “Duck Duet,” which also requires a smooth legato with the parallel fifths in the accompaniment. A beautiful legato is needed in a number of other pieces, e.g., in the contrary motion of “Circles,” the steady slow march of “Two by Two They Came,” or the placid and restful “End of Day.” On the other hand, staccato technique comes to the fore in “Jumping High” and “The Clocks,” among others. “The Robin” has quick bursts of repeated notes.

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In addition to the pedagogical focus on pianistic technique, the set also serves as an effective introduction to various musical concepts or styles. Some introduction to twentieth-century techniques arrives via the bitonality of “Black and White,” with the hands playing concurrent all-black and all-white passages; the parallel fifths of “Duck Duet”; and the modal teases of “Run, Rabbit, Run.”

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Additionally, none of the pieces has a key signature and a few include changing meters. “Follow the Leader” serves to introduce playing in canon and is a good precursor to Baroque imitative writing. Even the style of the melody, or subject, and the necessary articulation point to Baroque.

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In conclusion, we played a little SEMLA joke. Because of our recent activities in Memphis at the Peabody Hotel, with its famous ducks (both SEMLA and MLA conferences had recently taken place there), Sarah showed a slide of said ducks while Anna played the “Duck Duet.” General merriment ensued. Louise surely approved.

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NOTES

1. The initial inspiration for this collaboration came in an e-mail from Anna Neal to Sarah Dorsey in the Spring of 2006 suggesting a presentation on Louise Talma’s piano music at SEMLA. The special challenge of translating a presentation with live performance may be partially alleviated by listening to these recordings of the pieces discussed, with the exception of the Bagatelles, which have never been released commercially. Sarah Dorsey would like to acknowledge support from Mary Katherine Amos, Dr. Elizabeth Keathley, the Music Division of the Library of Congress, the Music Library Association Dena Epstein Award, and her parents, Eleanor and William Dorsey.  
*Childhood Memories—Music for Younger Pianists*. Includes selections from *Soundshots*. Sahan Arzruni. New World Records 80590, 2002.  
*The Ambient Air*. Includes selections from *Soundshots*. Diana Ambache. Naxos 8.559236, 2006.  
*Music of Louise Talma*. Includes Etudes and *Alleluia*. Theresa Bogard. CRI 833, 1999. [OP].
2. Beth Mularczyk, “43 Seasons at MacDowell Colony Foster an Eminent Body of Work: A Conversation with Composer Louise Talma,” *Peterborough Transcript* (August 7, 1986): 1.
3. *Ibid.*, 3.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Richard M. Braun, “Louise Talma at 72,” *SoHo News* (January 25, 1979): 29.
6. Paul Moor, “Louise Talma’s ‘*The Alcestiad*’ in Premier at Frankfurt Opera,” *New York Times* (March 2, 1962): 25.
7. Braun, “Louise Talma at 72,” 29.
8. Arthur Berger, “Stravinsky and the Younger Composers,” *Score* no. 12 (June 1955): 41.
9. Louise Talma, “Untitled,” in *Perspectives of New Music (Stravinsky Memorial Issue)* 9, no. 2 (1971): 87.
10. Tim Page, “Gideon and Talma at 80—Composers and Neighbors,” *New York Times* (October 19, 1986): 108.
11. Gordon Emerson, “Ms. Talma On Women and Wilder,” *New Haven Register* (Sunday, March 14, 1976): 1D.
12. Letter from Louise Talma to Julia Anne Morris, dated March 30, 1980.

## APPENDIX. Conference Handout

Sarah, Anna and Louise –  
What, no Thelma?

SEMLA Conference 2006  
October 13, 2006

Piano Works				
Title	Date	Commission	Dedicatee	Premiere
Two Dances	1934			
Four-Handed Fun	1939		Lukas Foss	August 1943 Talma/Foss MacDowell Colony
Sonata #1	1943		Marian MacDowell	January 21, 1946 Talma League of Composers, New York
Alleluia in Form of Toccata	1945		Harold & Esther Shapero	November 9, 1945 Ray Lev Carnegie Hall
Venetian Folly: Overture and Barcarolle	1946-47	Otto Zoff		
Pastoral Prelude	1949		Rick	February 5, 1950
Bagatelle	1950		Rick	
Six Etudes	1953-54	John Edmunds	1. Thornton Wilder 2. Estelle Herschler 3. John Edmunds 4. Paul Nordoff 5. Guiomar Novaes 6. Beveridge Webster	April 18, 1955 Beveridge Webster League of Composers, Carnegie Hall
Sonata #2	1944 (mvts 1,2) 1952-55 (mvt 3)		Thornton Wilder	February 13, 1959 Paul Harelson American Music Festival, New York, WNYC
Three Bagatelles	1955		Thornton Wilder	February 18, 1960 Paul Harelson American Music Festival, New York, WNYC
Passacaglia and Fugue	1955-62		Thornton Wilder	July 31, 1962 Luise Vosgerchian MacDowell Colony
Soundshots	1944-74		Sahan Arzruni	1974 Sahan Arzruni WNYC, New York
Textures	1977	International Society for Contemporary Music, honoring 70 <sup>th</sup> birthday of Beveridge Webster	Beveridge Webster	March 17, 1978 Beveridge Webster ISCM Concert, New York
Kaleidoscopic Variations	1984	Jeffrey Blocker, in memory of Rose Raymond	Rose Raymond	October 7, 1986 Sahan Arzruni Merkin Hall, New York
Ave Atque Vale	1989			